To the New Jersey Department of Education:

We represent the students of Ewing High School and are writing to you because we are concerned about the new PARCC testing that will be implemented in the 2014-2015 school year. We believe that it is not in the best interest of the students to switch to this new test. Alternatively, the state should consider postponing this test and continue to use HSPA and the NJ ASK until the PARCC test can be better supported throughout all districts.

Computer based testing, such as the PARCC test, may not be a realistic goal for all districts. Many school districts are already struggling to provide resources for students. Schools have to find the funds for computers, tablets, internet, supplies, food, transportation, sports and extra-curricular equipment, staff salaries, water, power, and many more essentials to keep the school running and the students safely learning. Ewing High School, for example, currently does not have enough computers available for classes to get sufficient computer lab time. Teachers and classes get frustrated because they are not able to get enough time with computers in order to complete research projects and papers and meet curriculum standards. Students that attend schools that are underfunded and lack access to technology may not have the necessary computer skills to complete a computer based exam. So not only does the PARCC exam test students on their English and Math skills, but essentially it is testing their computer skills as well. In addition to the biased test format, logistically it may be impossible for some districts to accommodate all of the students that need to test due to the lack of computers and technology available. If districts are forced to find the money to acquire the technology they may have no choice but to cut programs and reallocate funds to meet these needs. This would be unfair to students and staff alike that participate in those programs that might be at risk. For some districts this test may not be a financial burden but for others, such as ours, it will be.